



NEWS RELEASE

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MAYOR ANNOUNCES ACHIEVEMENT OF 54 URBAN GARDENS IN CENTER TOWNSHIP IN 2011

After Exceeding Goal Set for Year's End, Mayor Issues Call for 2011 Sustainability Awards Applications

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today announced that the SustainIndy Urban Garden Program has successfully achieved 54 urban gardens in Center Township, exceeding the City's goal of 50 by the end of 2011. Urban gardens bring neighbors together on shared, community projects and provide fresh fruits and vegetables to people with limited food resources.

"Urban gardens give residents a place to grow healthy food and work together to create a sense of community," said Mayor Ballard. "We have replaced dozens of vacant lots with beautiful gardens that offer fresh produce and improve the quality of life for families, friends and neighbors who tend them."

The Urban Gardens program is a collaborative partnership between the Department of Metropolitan Development, the Indianapolis Land Bank and the Office of Sustainability that allows community groups and individuals to use Land Bank properties for growing healthy produce. The Office of Sustainability worked with the Food Coalition of Central Indiana to identify the locations for the gardens. The gardens are an important component to meeting the need for healthy food in inner-city neighborhoods considered "food deserts."

Mayor Ballard also announced today the call for applications for the 2011 Sustainability Awards. Presented by the Office of Sustainability, McKinney Green Initiatives Fund and the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Indianapolis Sustainability Awards are designed to inspire innovation, showcase impact, reward leadership and promote education around the principles of sustainability. Because the City of Indianapolis considers urban gardens a top viable option for converting blighted land into sustainable, usable space that connects neighbors to build healthy lives together, community garden organizers are encouraged to apply for the 2011 Sustainability Awards.

Five awards will be given to honor excellence in each of the following categories: water, land, air, energy and reduce, reuse, recycle. Projects submitted for consideration must have been completed in Marion County between Jan. 1, 2011, and Dec. 31, 2011. Applications must be completed and returned by Friday, Feb. 3, 2011. For more information on Mayor Ballard's Urban Garden Program and the 2011 Sustainability Awards, visit www.indy.gov/SustainIndy.

Editors: Attached please find a map of the registered urban gardens in Center Township.

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